

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

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JOHN DOE and JANE DOE,	:	
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Plaintiffs,	:	
	:	25-CV-3769 (JMF)
-v-	:	
	:	<u>MEMORANDUM OPINION</u>
PAM BONDI, <i>in her official capacity as Attorney</i>	:	<u>AND ORDER</u>
<i>General of the United States</i> , et al.,	:	
	:	
Defendants.	:	
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JESSE M. FURMAN, United States District Judge:

On May 14, 2025, Plaintiffs renewed their motion for leave to file their Complaint and related filings using pseudonyms and with partial redactions. *See* ECF No. 7. Plaintiffs’ motion is GRANTED in part and DENIED in part, subject to reconsideration upon timely motion by Defendants upon their appearance in the event that they believe the redactions are improper.

For substantially the reasons discussed in Plaintiffs’ memorandum of law, *see* ECF No. 7-1, at 1-4, the Court finds that the potential risks of disclosing Plaintiffs’ identities and other sensitive identifying information outweigh any prejudice to Defendants and the countervailing public interest in disclosure, *see Sealed Plaintiff v. Sealed Defendant*, 537 F.3d 185, 189 (2d Cir. 2008) (“[W]hen determining whether a plaintiff may be allowed to maintain an action under a pseudonym, the plaintiff’s interest in anonymity must be balanced against both the public interest in disclosure and any prejudice to the defendant.”). Specifically, disclosure of Plaintiffs’ identities may subject them to risks based on the asylum seeker’s political views and political activities. *See, e.g., MM v. Mayorkas*, No. 24-CV-02090 (NSR), 2024 WL 1795766, at \*2 (S.D.N.Y. Apr. 25, 2024) (“Federal courts have permitted asylum seekers to proceed anonymously in federal court proceedings.”); *see also, e.g., J.M.H. v. Freden*, No. 24-CV-875-LJV, 2025 WL 81919, at \*4 (W.D.N.Y. Jan. 13, 2025) (“[T]he potential harm of disclosing J.M.H.’s identity — including the fact that it could cause her to be subject to persecution and harassment — outweighs the public’s interest in disclosure under both the common law and First Amendment standards.”). Accordingly, Plaintiffs’ request to proceed pseudonymously and to redact sensitive identifying information is GRANTED.


That said, Plaintiffs fail to provide any explanation for why *Defendants’* identities and titles need to be redacted from their public filings. To the extent that Plaintiffs seek to redact Defendants’ names and titles, therefore, the request is DENIED. And to the extent that Plaintiffs request that the entire case be filed under seal, *see* ECF No. 7-2, the request is also DENIED.

Accordingly, Plaintiffs are hereby ORDERED, no later than **May 27, 2025**, to re-file their Complaint and any related filings with redactions consistent with this Order. Per the Court's Individual Rules, Plaintiffs must file (1) a redacted version of the Complaint on the public docket and (2) an unredacted version of the Complaint under seal on ECF with the redacted portions highlighted. For all future filings containing redactions, per the Court's Individual Rules, each party must simultaneously file a (1) letter motion requesting leave to file the document under seal with an explanation for why the proposed redactions are consistent with this Order; (2) a redacted version of the filing on the public docket; and (3) an unredacted version of the filing under seal on ECF with the redacted portions highlighted.

The Clerk of Court is directed (1) to terminate ECF No. 7; and (2) to update the docket to list Plaintiffs as "John Doe" and "Jane Doe" (and to name all Defendants upon the re-filing of the Complaint).

SO ORDERED.

Dated: May 21, 2025  
New York, New York

  
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JESSE M. FURMAN  
United States District Judge